



## **Lieutenant Governor Maldonado Honors Memorial Day at Los Angeles National Cemetery**

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LOS ANGELES – Lieutenant Governor Abel Maldonado today joined state, local, and military officials to participate in the Memorial Day program at the Los Angeles National Cemetery to honor service men and women who have sacrificed their lives while protecting our nation.

The transcript of his remarks as prepared for the ceremony is below:

It is fitting that we gather here today to remember those that went before us. An old saying goes that a person does not truly die until he is forgotten and his or her name is no longer spoken.

Therefore, I'd like to take a few moments of silence to bring back to life, those members of our families that have before us and allowed us the opportunity to pray to whom ever we please; to work in whatever field we choose; and allowed us the opportunity to live free in the greatest nation the world has ever seen.

Thank you.

As we sit here today in 2010, we are secure in the knowledge that we are privileged to live in the freest society – past or present – ever seen on this planet.

Today, the United States of America does not back down to any man or any nation.

The United States of America stands supreme.

But those of us who know history know that it was not always this way.

The United States of America, founded on the premise of freedom, personal and religious, has been said to be a grand experiment.

Today, we don't know the final result of that experiment, but each of us here has a stake in its outcome and a responsibility to make that experiment a profound success.

Our founding fathers left Europe to escape religious persecution. Two hundred and thirty-four years after their declaration of independence from King George III, I can stand here freely and speak openly on any subject I choose without fear of retribution.

Throughout recorded history, man has always aspired to be free.

In the first century, Jewish Zealots faced the 10<sup>th</sup> Legion of Rome at Masada in their attempt to win freedom.

The slave Spartacus led a revolt to be free from his oppressors.

In World War II, the allies fought the Axis powers to win freedom from the tyranny dominating Europe.

But at what prices does freedom come?

The Zealots chose suicide rather than submit. Spartacus and his followers were slaughtered when his attempt to be free failed.

On the beaches of Normandy on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1944, common men showed uncommon valor dying to free men and women they had never met, who spoke different languages, and lived on foreign lands.

As I said before, the United States of America is said to be an experiment.

We have had our triumphs: such as winning independence from Great Britain and protecting it by defeating those that would revoke it from us.

But, we have seen low moments, as well:

The assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. The assassination of John F. Kennedy and his brother, Robert F. Kennedy.

The assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the incarceration of loyal American citizens of Japanese descent.

How did these things happen in such a great nation?

I believe that the answer is we are indeed a grand experiment, and sometimes experiments don't always go right.

However, I believe our nation is unlike any other country, in that our nation tries hard to attain the sacred perfection and promises that it was founded upon. And we try just as hard to atone for the past errors we have made.

Today, we live in comfort in the United States. And in our comfort, we tend to forget or minimize the sacrifices our veterans have made and continue to make to protect our freedoms.

In our comfort, we forget the courage it took to disembark a landing craft into withering fire.

In our comfort, we forget what carnage a German 88 could do to a tank at the Kasserene Pass.

In our comfort, we forget the pain and bleeding a young soldier could experience when hit by mortar fragments.

In our comfort we forget the pain of a mother or a wife as she reads the words “The Armed Forces regrets to inform you...”

In our comfort, we forget the fear in the words “incoming” or “medic”.

The price of our freedom and comfort has always been blood. Whether it is at Masada or at the Argonne Forest; or on the Saipan; or at the Inchon Invasion; or a rice paddy in Vietnam.

As long as we remember what these young men and women did and why, they will not have died in vain and they will live in our hearts forever.